

On the relations of free knowledge to moral sentiment. A lecture delivered in University College, London, on the 13th of October, 1847. As introductory to the session of 1847-8 / [Francis William Newman].

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RELATIONS OF FREE KNOWLEDGE
TO MORAL SENTIMENT.

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RELATIONS OF FREE KNOWLEDGE

TO

MORAL SENTIMENT.

A LECTURE

DELIVERED IN UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, LONDON,

ON THE 13TH OF OCTOBER, 1847,

AS INTRODUCTORY TO THE SESSION OF 1847—8.

By FRANCIS W. NEWMAN,

PROFESSOR OF LATIN,

AND FORMERLY FELLOW OF BALIOL COLLEGE, OXFORD.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR TAYLOR AND WALTON,

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1847.

ON THE

RELATIONS OF FREE KNOWLEDGE

MORAL SENTIMENT

A LECTURE

DELIVERED IN UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, LONDON

ON THE 14TH OF OCTOBER, 1841

BY FRANCIS DE NEWMANN

PRINTED BY J. JOHNSON, ST. PAUL'S CHURCH-YARD

LONDON:

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BY CLIFFORD STREET

1841

ON THE

RELATIONS OF FREE KNOWLEDGE TO MORAL SENTIMENT.

NEARLY two centuries and a half have passed since Bacon gave forth the celebrated sentence, "Knowledge is Power," which no longer needs either proof or illustration. In enunciating it the great philosopher did but give clear utterance to a conception which had for ages dimly worked in the hearts of the multitude, and had often kindled them into furious and cruel zeal. For there never was a time within the reach of tradition when the vulgar did not firmly believe in the existence of a knowledge which was emphatically power, and they called it Magic or Sorcery. This obvious fact shows that the battle in behalf of knowledge, as in itself good, still remained to be fought, after the Baconian adage had been ever so cordially admitted. And at this day there are many persons, neither thoughtless, uninformed, nor uninfluential, who continue to dread the constant advances of knowledge uncontrolled by moral safeguards. They urge that admiration of mere power is a kind of devil-worship. An engine, they say, which may be effectually used either for good or evil, will be looked on with terror by a wise man, when trusted promiscuously to the multitude. Some of them then proceeded to infer that it ought to be reserved in the keeping of those whose moral and spiritual culture affords some guarantee for its

being well applied, and that it ought to be sedulously dealt out only to such as are willing to receive a definite moral training superadded. Finally, since they conceive this moral training to depend upon the distinct inculcation of religious doctrine, they conclude that every collegiate establishment should be subjected (directly or indirectly) to the test of a religious creed, as the grand security that the knowledge which may be imparted and obtained will be rightly applied, or produce wholesome effect on the mind.

Where these scruples are real and genuine, they deserve respectful treatment; but, sad to say, it is too plain that with many they are mere affectation. With thousands of the higher ranks in this religious country, external religion is one of the decorums of life; for the spirit of which how little they themselves care, their reckless ambition, voluptuousness, selfishness, or inveterate worldliness speak too plainly to allow of more than one opinion. The hypocritical cry of such men concerning the importance and necessity of religious education may be summarily dismissed with contempt. But that is no reason against fairly stating and meeting the difficulties felt by the candid. We may, then, admit at once that the acquisition of knowledge, however valuable in a profession or art, is quite secondary, as regards the real worth of man, to the adopting of good habits and imbibing of right sympathies. We do not pretend that any lecturing of our most accomplished and experienced professors, or any assiduity in the most advanced students, drives direct towards these ends. But we turn and ask, — What university, hitherto, has solved the practical problem which we are reproached for declining formally to undertake? It is notorious that, through the last century and at the opening of the present, neither good habits nor virtuous sympathies were often promoted at either of our old universities; yet then, as now, test articles were signed, and attendance at daily chapel, at divinity-lectures, and at the

Lord's Supper was compulsory on the students. If the modern race of university-men has improved, it is not because these institutions have adopted a new creed or new observances, but because they enforce more diligence in study, and because a more moral and religious spirit is abroad through society. We admit and maintain that the promotion of right sympathies is of the first importance; but there is no formula of teaching by which this can be brought about, whatever the name of the study, whether science, history, morals, or theology. It cannot be fixed in a printed prospectus, secured by the rules of a committee or by act of Parliament. It depends on the living contact of spirit with spirit, and refuses to abide permanently under any prescribed exterior.

So again, as to the formation of good habits, it avails nothing to declaim upon the value of this as an end. The habits prevailing in every old university depend from year to year on the young men themselves, and are absolutely unaffected by divinity-lectures and such like apparatus; yet, in the course of a generation, they are most sensibly affected by the state of literary study within and by the tone of society without. Thus Oxford and Cambridge depend for their morals and their sentiments, not on those formalities which they uphold and which we have declined, but on those circumstances which belong to them and to us in common. College-lectures do not swallow up the whole life of a college-student. He is far more influenced by his equals in age and associates, or by his family and connexions; and in the real world has to earn for himself a moral culture which we do not engage to bestow in a lecture-room. Openly to decline that responsibility is more honourable; to undertake it, even with a systematic and notorious neglect of the duty, would very often be more profitable.

Nevertheless there are many moralities naturally attaching themselves to a diligent pursuit of knowledge which ought not to be underrated. Those who talk of superadding

moral training to intellectual enlightenment as essential in a collegiate system, must surely have very indistinct ideas of what moral training means. It does not consist in hearing or committing to memory a set of moral rules, however excellent, but in acquiring a habit of self-denial, self-sacrifice or self-restraint, in obedience to them; and it is most obvious that example, circumstance, and motive, not precept, are here wanted. On the other hand, in order to attain knowledge, of whatever kind, the mind of necessity passes through many processes, and receives a culture which is in a great measure moral. Young men retrench the amusements enticing to their age, labour hard in their study instead of gratifying ease, repress the ebullitions of mirth and frolic in deference to the proprieties of a lecture-room, practise towards their fellow-students the politeness of a gentleman and the friendliness of an equal in age; finally, learn to concentrate their efforts on a definite object of pursuit—that of improving their minds for future service. Moreover, in all the higher branches of knowledge, the habit of investigating truth and valuing it for its own sake is cultivated. Positive science, it has been observed by an eminent person at Cambridge, helps us towards the acquisition of a high intellectual virtue,—a confidence in the objective existence and unchangeableness of truth; and, by showing that truth (in one immense department of human thought) is within the reach of man, dispels the secret corroding scepticism by which the love of truth has been so often sapped. In the case of the ancient Academics, it is clear that to believe truth wholly unattainable was practically equivalent to doubting whether there was any truth at all. Further, the study of languages enhances delicacy of perception and the feeling of moral distinctions, without which there can be no force or beauty of composition. Ancient literature, and the wide survey of the past which history takes, deepen our knowledge of mankind, and our insight into social and political interests; and such

enlightenment has a very intimate connexion with reverence for those moralities on which all the happiness of society turns. In short, the general principle, that, "outward temptation remaining the same, morality increases with intellectual development," may be confirmed from the experience of one of our old universities, where it was long notorious that those colleges which conducted their elections with a single reference to literary superiority were uniformly distinguished by the moral worth of their fellows.

We do not, therefore, bow down in reverence to knowledge or power without reference to moral considerations, and much less to evil knowledge or evil power,—which would justly be called devil-worship; but we hold that, by the adorable wisdom of God, all good things have an affinity for one another, and in the long run tend to coincide. Political power has often been in evil keeping, and most hatefully applied; the nature of the case forbids all formal and direct attempts to guarantee that it shall fall into virtuous hands; it is very often clutched by the violent, or stolen by the cunning; yet, on the whole, it is confessedly and most signally of first-rate value to mankind. So, likewise, of other secondary powers, which are wholly unmoral, as the printing press. Whatever dreadful results through human wickedness might have been anticipated from such an engine, no enlightened persons doubt that it is on the whole a stupendous benefit; nor would it be improved by any imaginable religious restrictions placed upon authors, publishers, or printers. The inventions and appliances of art ought in principle to be treated exactly as men's natural powers—the hand, the eye, the uneducated mind; for art, some one has said, is natural to man. Abuse of any of these powers must be punished; but no one can imagine that nations would be morally better, if men had but one hand or one eye instead of two; all must admit that the hand and the eye are in themselves eminently valuable,

although we are not forced to subscribe 39 articles as a guarantee for the right use of either. The same is true of the mental eye, and of the accumulated power which the culture of successive generations has given to it. In superintending the education of an individual, we may reasonably be anxious to secure a proportionate development of the different parts of the mind. But public systems of instruction cannot, and will not, enter into these minute cares, profess what they may about it. A freer method is essential; and happily there is no reasonable ground for doubt, not only that the onesideness of individuals promotes the many-sidedness of a nation, but that whoever adds fresh intensity to any single power does in so far a clear valuable service.

No one will hesitate to admit that the disunion between rank and rank, State and State, on which so large an item of human misery has always depended, has been the more formidable and apparently hopeless, because it has not been confined to the bad and unprincipled, but has been diffused among the wellmeaning and comparatively virtuous. Factions and wars could never have long sustained their own intensity had not many principles of energetic virtue imparted strength to them; for a party or a country destitute of these, presently falls to ruin in its own rottenness. Now, this very circumstance points out, that whatever the deficiency of mankind in power of self-sacrifice for apprehended duty, their deficiency in information and in wisdom is still greater; and that whatever diffuses intellectual light, will ultimately tend to union and harmony. Unmoral though it may be in itself, metaphysically viewed, yet it cannot be dissociated from the moral powers of indivisible man; and, as in the Highest of all existences, we believe omniscience and perfect goodness to minister to each other, so in the lower approximations of His reasonable creatures towards His true image the different powers of the soul find a mutual support, and tend towards perfection together.

It may be worth while to analyze, what was the element

residing (or supposed to reside) in the black art of old times, which stirred men up into burning jealousy, and caused it to be ascribed to the spirits of Hell. Why were the witch, the astrologer, and the anatomist looked on with so much apprehension? Should any stout hater of priestcraft reply that the clergy desired to put down all knowledge which they could not keep in their own hands, and therefore represented it as gained by selling one's soul to the Devil, there must still have been some ground in human nature for them to work upon, or they could not have kindled passions so powerful. Surely, it was the darkness, the secrecy, the exclusiveness of the arts emphatically called Black, which stamped them with suspicion. The power of their professors was supposed to be not only absolutely great, but confined to themselves, as it was shrouded in impenetrable mystery. If the study of sorcery had been public and free to all, it could not much longer have seemed evil; but while it was uncertain how many possessed this wonderful science,—what was their relative proficiency,—and up to what limits their power extended, no man could speculate even on the probability that the bad designs of one would be checked by the virtue or by the interests of another. Thus it was not the knowledge, and the power derived from it, at which human nature shuddered, but the appropriation or monopoly of it by a few, who constituted a secret brotherhood, perhaps in league against the rest of their species.

Such precisely is the nature of the dangers to be feared, not from an indiscriminate and impartial diffusion of knowledge, but from restricting it to those who have exclusive interests, or who bind themselves to uphold some one set of opinions. However some good men may cheat their own understanding, it is certain that a readiness to sign articles is no test of moral or spiritual sentiment; and is utterly ridiculous as a guarantee for any sort of goodness, present or future. The system is not even venerable for its antiquity, but is an inheritance transmitted from times when each

man was eager to use the power of the State in enforcing his private opinions, and when Church-property was a scramble for selfishness. Nor can any arguments for continuing such exclusiveness be devised which do not amount to this:—that young men's minds must be *managed* so as to push certain opinions upon them which, without peculiar external appliances, could not recommend and support themselves; and that knowledge (as far as possible) is to be confined to a special class, who are (as long as possible) bound over to maintain a fixed code of doctrine. I will not insist that this is glaringly absurd in a system which does not profess infallibility. What may here more especially be noted is, that an exclusive corporation is thus generated, having peculiar interests of its own. To intrust to it a monopoly of knowledge (an enactment which on that hypothesis must be desirable, if possible) would be to run headlong on the sorcerer's rock, and turn the academic clergyman into a professor of the black art. Every restrictive trade is liable to a moral disease of its own. There have been kingcraft and priestcraft, lawyercraft, doctorcraft, and many other crafts beside, each virulent in proportion to the completeness of the mystery and of the monopoly. But, break down the walls of exclusiveness; let the wind of heaven play through the dark chambers of pretension; pour the natural light into the desks and drawers of official technicality; and a healthier, sweeter breath soon comes forth from professional halls, when scholastic and traditionary lore is forced to endure the gaze of strong native intelligence. All this is notorious. Are we very unreasonable then, if we go so far as to think that an ecclesiastical corporation is liable to the same defects as all similar bodies? For myself I must confess, that wherever there is artificial appropriation, I am irresistibly impelled to suspect something amiss; while the great manifesto of simple-minded purpose is seen in the hearty desire of diffusing knowledge as unshackled by conditions as the natural light of heaven.

To enter on a larger subject, — it is highly significant both of future results and of present duty, that in our stage of social culture, knowledge can only advance *by being* diffused. That which some writers carp at as a flaw and a foible in our modern state, may be boldly claimed as one great point of superiority. We are a mechanical age, it is said; everything is done by combination and organization. We need philosophical and literary societies, Royal Institutions, British Associations, Academies, Colleges, Universities, in order that knowledge may flourish. How different from the sage of antiquity, who by solitary musings courted truth; who found a higher inspiration in the depth of the wilderness, where his meditations fructified into power that moved heaven and earth! Such statements are adapted to delude the religious heart, which knows, and will ever know, the value of lonely musings. Nevertheless, the facts are herein utterly misrepresented. Isolated man is very weak, in intellect as in body. It is the play of mind upon mind which originally develops every faculty in the infant and in the growing boy; and only by joint effort, by mutual enlightenment, by learning from predecessors, by alternate inspection, by each verifying what another has suggested, can we make sure and sound advances. This may be called a mechanical procedure, but it is not the less intellectual; such a phraseology is a vain attempt to lower modern intellect, but it will rather elevate the name of mechanism. The combination of mind with mind is to be gloried in as eminently human, as one of our most obvious distinctions from the highest brute intellect, — as that on which our whole power of progress depends; and the extent to which we are now able to carry out combined intellectual effort, is that which confers its eminence on modern Europe. Not fellow-countrymen alone unite in these noble und fruitful efforts. Germany and France, Sweden and Russia,—and once more efficiently than now, Italy and Greece,—join the various population that lisps with the tongue of England, to

study what is, what was, what will be, what ought to be, what must be. A knowledge diffused from land to land of what each is doing and has attained, is, we say, a main condition of the highest further success. It is at the same time a sufficient security against any abuse of the power resulting from knowledge.

If, indeed, one man could confine to his own bosom the terrible secrets of chemistry, or if one nation could keep to herself the marvellous force of machinery,—if a narrow company could appropriate the wealth which would arise from a monopoly of medical and surgical art, or if a prince's cabinet could alone possess, as kingcraft, the theory and experience of politics,—such exclusive cunning would be as formidable to the rest of mankind as the old sorcery and magic. But publicity and diffusion take the sting out of knowledge. The serpent's poison is gone, but the wisdom of the serpent remains behind. No people of Europe owes its high position to hidden cleverness; and those are foremost who are most frank in publishing their knowledge and their ignorance, their evil and their good,—who allow, and as it were invite, criticism from natives and imitation by foreigners. A great generosity has grown into the dealings of our statesmen, and will grow henceforth in all the leading nations. Publication of knowledge is the European maxim. Antiquity was reserved and selfish, because she was weak. When the national existence of a people was insecure, it desired to cripple all neighbour states, and looked with jealousy on their internal growth. But now the storms of ages have rooted in the ground the mightier communities of Europe: foreign conquest or national disintegration are as the goblins once dreaded in childhood. To a Phœnician or old Roman statesman we should seem mad, in publishing for the eyes of envious or hostile foreigners the maps and soundings of our rivers, ports, and coasts; nay, the internal grudges and discontents, the parties and factions, which oppose the authority or policy of the mother country. It is

impossible here to overlook the close connexion between free knowledge and simplicity of purpose. Those who have evil designs dare not bare their bosoms to the light; but the love of Knowledge for its own sake, in proportion to its purity and intensity, is truly disinterested, and never fails to promote most directly a love of Truth and of Justice.

How extensively intellectual influences are at work for moral purposes, in spite of the necessary admixtures which must be expected from human infirmity—how we see them beginning to unite and harmonize nations by creating common interest, imparting sympathy, diffusing just and merciful sentiment, may be here briefly set forth. Of course, it is fully understood that all this is in co-operation with a merciful religion; but that religion did not always display the same phenomena. For ages together it was torpid, until revived by the intellectual excitement which the first diffusion of Greek literature produced; and the effect of the ancient classics has been obviously most beneficial in those countries where governments and priesthoods have least been able to surround them with importunate moral safeguards.

It would be needless and tedious to insist in detail on the sympathy between nation and nation, which the cultivation of Physical Science is producing. The British Association is the great fact which typifies the state of things. The softening of jealousy into wholesome emulation is strikingly seen, when we compare the acrimonious contests of former days concerning the pretensions of Newton with the tranquil harmony between Adams and Leverrier, in spite of the bluster of a too vehement partisan who would have set them and their nations at variance. It is the less wonderful that men of science should have cosmopolitan feeling; for their subject has in it nothing national or local, and can be discussed and felt with equal vividness in every cultivated tongue; and as in its leading branches mutual correction is seldom very difficult, good men do not imbibe that aversion

for one another which is too common when their differences of opinion are irremovable. But in literature likewise the mutual amenities of State towards State are highly gratifying; the readiness to open to foreigners all facilities for prosecuting literary works, which used to be the exception, is becoming the rule in the leading continental states, from whom in fact, we have still much to learn.

Nevertheless, mere speculative interests could not affect any large part even of our upper classes, and the co-operation of Governments in such matters must always be of a rather otiose kind. In order that the sympathy may take a deeper practical character, a common sphere of necessary action is required; towards which we are peculiarly helped by a critical fact in the structure of the earth. God has given the Sea to all nations, as their common property. It is no longer to us the "vintage-less" or barren brine, as Homer called it, for it yields an exuberant harvest; nor can we allow to Horace that it is the "dissociable ocean," for it is a principal cause of union to civilized men. Not only is it "the highway of nations," as a mere neutral space or vacuity; it is a field of common interest, loudly calling for co-operation. The knowledge which throws light on it, and which guards the sailor from danger, is valuable to all. Hence we have seen distant nations combining to execute the scientific work suggested by the British Association for the discovery of magnetic and atmospheric laws, and the first mercantile country in the world surveying the coasts of the Mediterranean and of Terra del Fuego for the benefit of mankind at large. It is but a reflection and type of European opinion, that the Emperor Nicholas at his last peace with Turkey, and Queen Victoria on terminating the war with the Chinese, stipulated for the admission of the ships of all nations without distinction through the Dardanelles, and into the same ports of China. The notion of peculiar rights in the sea, except as essential to national security, is now antiquated, opposed to the genius of the

age, and allowed only in exceptive cases on the plea of old prescription.

But navigation would be comparatively feeble to unite nations, did not the application of Science to Art give infinite variety to the products which are to be interchanged. In early and rude days the raw materials of food, dress, furniture or building,—and metals such as copper and gold, which are naturally found in great purity,—are the things given and taken in exchange. With the development, first of the useful, and then of the fine arts, a vast increase of commerce takes place; nevertheless, its activity is chiefly confined to nations which have much natural disparity, either in the character of their productions, or in the stage of their civilization. But with the opening of industrial *Science*, and the cheapening of sea or land freightage, every nation becomes eager for the goods of every other nation; and it is impossible for any two to be so alike that a most vigorous trade (if unimpeded by meddling legislation) shall not spring up. Supercilious moralists may treat with scorn the preference of silk to cotton or linen, of mahogany to elm, of porcelain to crockery; and may act the philosopher by assuring us that a rough bench and three-legged stools answer the purposes of life as well as the best easy chairs. To an ancient Cynic a tub or a dog-kennel seemed as serviceable as a house; nor do we question that there are times in the life of most men, when they must throw themselves back on these hardy and soldierlike principles, and prove that they are lords and not slaves of the comforts or elegancies which surround them. Nevertheless, to speak generally, such independence and such carelessness for things external is not desirable, except in a savage state, of which it is a leading characteristic. There every man seeks to need no aid from his fellow, and is free to quarrel with all his species. For the great moral purposes of society it is on the contrary important, that each man should be as much as possible dependent, not indeed on any one individual, but on society at

large. So too in the great community of nations it is of high moment that each should be socially and sensibly dependent on all the rest collectively; a result which is brought about by numerous artificial tastes, by a great division of labour, and by a consequent activity of commerce. This is indeed the fundamental condition for knitting all the families of mankind into a single mutually related system.

Hereby we are further led to the mention of one thoroughly modern science, the uniting force of which has already been perceptible enough, and is destined to be far greater,—I mean the science of Political Economy. Some persons will perhaps meet this expectation with an incredulous smile. That science, they will say, professes only to trace the consequences of enlightened selfishness in pecuniary matters; and is it not rather imbecile to hope to glean out of selfishness any grains of generosity? But this is an unfair statement of the case. Generosity is no doubt an excellent thing, provided that Justice goes first; but justice has the earlier claim, and is by far the more important. A great mischief in past times has been, that nation or orders of men have affected to be generous, without having first been just; they reaped of course ingratitude for their favours, and spite in return for their pride. The occasions are very few on which generosity is called for, or is possible, from a nation to a nation, or from a class to a class; but justice is a matter of daily necessity. A sarcastic reasoner may, if he pleases, define Justice to be the balance of mutual selfishnesses; but it will not the less remain a principle venerated in earth and in heaven. Political economy however has demonstrated that the laws which morality would dictate as just are also the laws of physical wellbeing for nations and for classes; that no cunning regulations will enable a State to prosper at the expense of foreigners; and that the interests of classes and of nations are so knit up, that one cannot permanently be depressed without injury to others. It rescues the patriot from the temptation of being unjust to

the foreigner, by proving that that does not conduce to the welfare of his own people. It enlarges the heart of the aristocrat to believe that the order whose elevation he desires is best sustained in wealth and honour when the mass of the people is flourishing; it softens the bigotry of the populace, by revealing to them the real causes of dearth and abundance.

To all this the science of Politics adds a double force; a science which, as growing out of history, and still deficient in demonstrative accuracy, half appertains to literature. Indeed, for this very reason history holds the highest literary rank, because it is ever tending towards the form, and has imbibed the genius, of science; nor can it be doubted that the doctrines which have sprung from it have laid the foundation of immense results in Europe, in the century which has elapsed since Montesquieu wrote his *Spirit of Laws*. The controversies, indeed, of party-politics are apt to blind us to the great advances which have been made towards fixed principles. Every free State, of course, has at least two parties, one eager to alter and improve, another anxious chiefly to keep what exists; yet no pertinacity of opposition between them will prove that they do not hold much in common. All educated politicians among ourselves agree as to the rightful supremacy of law over every individual will, the equality of all men at the bar of law, the sanctity of the rights of all, and the duty of the magistrate to maintain them. All see the necessity of fixed rules concerning the succession to the crown, and fixed rights or privileges for such individuals or orders as are elevated above the Commons. All understand freedom to consist, not in a power to do what we please, but in being governed by wise law, not by caprice, or by special and personal restrictions. All hold that bad laws ought to be altered by means of deliberation and discussion, provided for by the constitution itself. All deprecate deciding by force the controversies which have to be settled by wisdom. All claim a right for

individuals of the nation temperately, yet publicly, to express their opinion on political matters of the deepest interest, and to support that opinion by argument. All are in favour of publicity for judicial trials, and of every other formality which experience has proved to conduce to just decisions. All teach the right of every rank in the nation to personal freedom and respect, and to the means of physical welfare and moral culture. So, again, as to international proceedings; all Statesmen are agreed in reprobating wars of ambition and aggression, or wars of mere jealousy, entered into for the sake of weakening a thriving, but unaggressive power; at the same time, all justify war to defend a weaker State from the encroachments of one more powerful. On most of these matters a public opinion has been formed wherever free discussion has been allowed, especially in Germanic Europe. This is not from a progress of democracy, as some would say: in fact France, which is more democratic than England, contributes less towards establishing the sacredness of law, and very little to international justice. It is from a progress of knowledge, and with it of wisdom; which in communities at large generally grow together.

I have insisted the more minutely on the harmonious advances of political thought, because there is no subject (not excepting even religion) on which human interest is habitually more intense, and violent passions more to be apprehended. No political hierarchy has been able to dictate preconceived conclusions in order to insure concord; yet a constant progress towards unity of sentiment has been made, with an increase of humanity and mildness which testifies how close is the relation between knowledge and moral sentiment. Nor are the phenomena of general European literature on the topic of *Morals* different from those in *Politics*. The unity, or, rather uniformity, of mental state, which showed itself in Europe during the middle ages, until the free literature of Italy began to work, was born out of a common religion, which nevertheless broke up in storm,

in hatred, and in unrelenting war. But a fresh unity has grown up, partly out of a study of the same ancient classics, and partly from the new vernacular literature, which has out-topped and nearly overshadowed them. In the vast variety of life which has burst forth, there is of course immense disparity of worth and of truth: yet there is an approximation towards a fixed standard. Nor is this gained by corrupting the better and higher doctrine to agree with the worse; but, on the whole, the true keeps winning upon the false. Let me point to one signal example of progress. The state of Slavery was never questioned as immoral by the philosophers of antiquity. Slave-holding is not stigmatised by the Christian Scriptures, nor by precept or example forbidden to Christians; and it was long practised by them without reproof. Yet the mind of cultivated Europe is now made up that it is immoral, unnatural, deserving to be put down by the law, as inconsistent with the rights of men, the honour of women, and the first principles of a political community. For the very reason that religion has pronounced no authoritative verdict upon the question, we see the more emphatically the power of truth upon the human mind, and the real advance of Europe.

If time would allow, it would be a curious and instructive topic to analyze the moral results which have followed from the noble group of Sciences which have encircled, supported, and adorned the Healing Art; sciences which, more perhaps than any others, have been cast free from all shackles, and, as some would say, ought therefore to be viewed with suspicion and terror. They have exerted an indirect but a most powerful influence on mental philosophy in general; have exploded a thousand superstitions, which were fatuous fires obscuring the true sun; and have laboured with indefatigable zeal in the cause of suffering man, not only with the result of bringing immediate relief to individual sufferers, but so as to stir up in the whole community a humane spirit, which (though enormously in arrears) is more active for good now than at any former time.

To the beneficial action of increasing knowledge upon our Religious Sentiments I scarcely dare to allude, lest I should offend against the proprieties of this place. Suffice it then to say that we happily see the spirit of mutual Toleration rising more and more triumphant out of every collision and every alarm. This is, perhaps, after all, the moral feature which, in contrast to other ages, is the characteristic honour of recent times. It may be snarled at by some as want of manliness, and be lamented by others as latitudinarian; but happily the present age knows the right time and place of showing that its religious convictions are earnest, without making fellow-men the victims which are to display its zeal. It is not deficiency in religious interest, but an overpowering sense of mutual justice, which leads the nineteenth century to abhor persecution and religious exclusion in civil and social affairs. In fact, this is the way towards real and certain knowledge. When passion and contention are calmed down, and the disputants know how to respect one another's convictions, then progress in truth is most likely to be made. We may lament that the spirit of mutual forbearance seems occasionally to be wanting; yet in comparison to the centuries before and after the Reformation our fiercest bigots are now lambs in meekness. This inestimable benefit we undeniably owe to the lessons of experience, and to the positive knowledge which has accrued from them. If the blood of martyrs has not always propagated the doctrines for which they died, it has taught us all the eternal lesson to detest the wickedness which persecuted them.

Should it be enquired how far these topics are appropriate to this institution, and to the opening of a new session within these walls—if it be suggested that much of the knowledge which has worked these great results is not properly scholastic, but has its origin in the struggles of practical life—we reply, that school-instruction would indeed be a poor advantage if it did not aid the pupil to carry out a

self-education in the world. To assert that scholastic teaching exhausted the whole field of knowledge would be to proclaim it a meagre and formal thing. Students do not come hither to learn all that is to be learned, but to gain or deepen acquaintance with certain branches, which may facilitate after-acquirements and stimulate investigation. A few languages are studied, partly as the key to many valuable books which cannot here be read, partly as a cultivation of the mind, and as communicating a general linguistic power. Select literature is perused by way of specimen, and serves to introduce the student into a far ampler course of reading, in which human nature may be advantageously studied. The foundations of science—mathematical, mechanical, chemical, botanical, optical, astronomical, as the case may be; or again, of history, law, and jurisprudence, political economy, and mental philosophy—are, we trust, here laid deep in the mind of the diligent pupil; the application and development of all must rest with himself in after years. But we do fearlessly say, that the systematic effort to master certain limited portions of knowledge embraced in a scholastic course is of the greatest permanent value to all who have enjoyed it, and eminently conduces to the advance of science, and to the highest growth of intellect. Knowledge must be popularized and diffused by other agency than collegiate teaching; but the men who are to diffuse it will always be the clearer, the fuller furnished, and the better balanced in understanding, for having had the advantage of such systematic culture; and, without asserting that this or any other definite means is essential to human progress, we hold that an improvement, an increase, a regeneration of university and college instruction, is of great moment for the welfare of England. Such was the belief—such the conviction—on which the founders of this College proceeded; and in the short years which have since elapsed they have witnessed no mean extension both of collegiate teaching and of national enlightenment. Of all

the results which the enlargement of knowledge produces, none so sensibly affects my own mind as its tendency to reconcile good men to one another, to moderate the conflict between the diverse orders of a State, and to cement the scattered and distant members of the human family. And it is certainly a pleasing hope, perhaps by no means Utopian, that when purer and brighter light has been vouchsafed to future generations—when the mist of controversies has been worked clear by the successive strivings of gallant, truth-loving minds,—disunion may mark only the ignorant and untaught; war between enlightened nations may be morally impossible; wisdom may have more influence over public measures than wealth or faction; and to the men of that day the Baconian maxim may be supplanted by another,—“Knowledge is Love.”